



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

For Immediate Release:

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Laurel Man Convicted in 2016 Sexual Assault of Loyola University Female Student

A Howard County jury has convicted a Laurel man of the January 2016 sexual assault of a Loyola University Maryland female student. Edward Witherspoon, 57, of the 8600 block of Eastern Morning Run, was found guilty of kidnapping, second-degree sex offense, third-degree sex offense and second degree assault late this afternoon.

According to police and prosecutors, on January 28, 2016, the 20-year old freshman and her dormitory room mates began a birthday celebration with vodka shots before venturing to the Inner Harbor and the Power Plant Live entertainment district. The woman became separated from her friends and she left the venue after midnight to search for them outside. It was at that point that she blacked out. "I woke up in a bed that wasn't mine," she testified, adding that a man she didn't know "was doing oral sex to me." The man drove her back from his basement apartment in Laurel to her Loyola dormitory the next morning where surveillance video recorded her arrival. She subsequently reported the assault to campus counselors and police who reported the crime to city detectives.

Witherspoon testified in his own defense during the three-day trial but Howard County State's Attorney Colleen McGuinn spotlighted glaring inconsistencies between his testimony and a Mirandized interview with detectives shortly after he was arrested. He stated that the young woman was intoxicated, falling down in the street and that her friends had abandoned her and so he offered her a ride after a licensed cabbie refused to transport her back to Loyola.

The jury deliberated for one hour before returning a verdict of guilty on all counts. Judge Raymond J. Kane, Jr. set a sentencing date of September 7 and ordered a pre-sentence investigation. Witherspoon, who is being held without bond, faces a maximum sentence of up to 70 years in prison. He also faces 10 years in prison for a 2015 second-degree assault of another young woman whom he transported from Fells Point to his basement apartment. That trial concluded last month when a Howard County jury deadlocked on rape and sex offense charges before returning a guilty verdict on the second-degree assault charge.

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